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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 AMMAN 002684

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ELA AND PRM/ANE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/14/2018

TAGS: [PREF](#) [EAID](#) [PREL](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR BEECROFT'S MEETING WITH UNHCR COUNTRY  
REPRESENTATIVE

Classified By: Classified By: Ambassador Robert S. Beecroft for reasons  
1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: In a September 10 courtesy call, Imran Riza, Country Representative for UNHCR, told Ambassador that UNHCR had a good relationship with the Government of Jordan, and that UNHCR continued its efforts to reach Iraqi refugees in Jordan. He thanked the USG for its continued support, and expressed willingness to cooperate with Post to improve the situation of refugees in Jordan as well as to increase the number of possible resettlement cases referred to the U.S. End summary.

#### RELATIONS BETWEEN UNHCR AND GOJ IMPROVING

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¶2. (C) Riza, accompanied by Deputy Country Representative Arafat Jamal described good cooperation with the GOJ,s inter-ministerial committee on Iraqi refugee issues. However, Riza said the GOJ did not appear prepared to move forward on issues such as legal status and work permits for refugees. In discussions on these issues, Riza said the GOJ frequently expressed fear of a negative public reaction to any expansion of Iraqi rights in the country.

#### LEGAL STATUS IS KEY TO PROTECTION OF REFUGEES

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¶3. (C) Stressing that legal status remains the number one protection issue; Riza said the GOJ needs a face-saving way to grant status to Iraqis while maintaining its public stance against permanent residency. According to Riza, in private conversations, GOJ officials acknowledge that treating refugees well would serve long-term Jordanian-Iraqi economic interests. As part of UNHCR,s efforts to build support for such measures within the GOJ, Riza explained that he would present a protection workshop for senior GOJ officials to familiarize them with methods other countries have used to grant legal status to refugees.

¶4. (SBU) To overcome Iraqi reluctance, driven by fear of deportation, to engage UNHCR, Riza said he is working with six partner organizations and community centers as information distribution points. However, the GOJ has objected to both mobile refugee registration and public information campaigns, arguing that UNHCR should resettle all 54,000 registered refugees before seeking more beneficiaries.

¶5. (SBU) Riza emphasized UNHCR,s need for accurate beneficiary numbers to judge the efficacy of assistance precisely. Of special concern are the numbers of Iraqi children in Jordanian schools and the number of Iraqis using Jordanian health facilities. Riza said he could demonstrate how services delivered by UNHCR and partners, such as food and cash distribution, benefited refugees directly.

IRAQIS ARE STILL IN NEED, NO MATTER WHAT THE NUMBER  
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16. (SBU) Riza noted that the refugees were predominantly middle-class Iraqis who arrived in Jordan with resources enough to support a short stay in the country. Over time, they have exhausted their funds and become destitute. UNHCR assistance was not sufficient to support a family, and without the right to work, refugees are falling deeper into poverty. While spontaneous repatriation from Jordan remains insignificant, Riza said that he wants to ensure that poverty in Jordan does not drive Iraqis to precipitous return.

17. (SBU) Medical and educational support are an important components of UNHCR's work. Riza said that he planned to work with UNICEF and partners in the coming year to reach school-age children who might not be attending classes. While basic healthcare was available to refugees, Riza explained that Iraqis suffering from chronic ailments did not have access to secondary or advanced healthcare in Jordan.

RESETTLEMENT NUMBERS STEADILY INCREASING  
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18. (C) Addressing the progress of the U.S. resettlement program, Ambassador told Riza he would like to see the maximum possible number of Iraqis recommended for resettlement to the United States. Increased outreach and registration would serve the U.S. goal of assisting Iraqis

AMMAN 00002684 002 OF 002

to live in Jordan in safety, or resettle in the U.S. when appropriate. Riza responded that he was confident that UNHCR would exceed the 2008 referral numbers for U.S. resettlement cases. UNHCR was working closely with Post Resettlement RefCoord and DHS to identify and process cases. Riza estimated that the USG accepted almost 90 percent of UNHCR referrals.

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